

A Gender-just Peace in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka: The Power of Intersectional Peacebuilding

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Abstract

This article examines the intersectional peace approach and assesses its effectiveness in acquiring a gender-just peace within a post-conflict society. This line of reasoning has been empirically exemplified through the gendered advocacy work of rural disabled Tamil women in post-conflict Sri Lanka. In recent times, the liberal peace model has become widely critiqued, resulting in a novel grounding of intersectionality into many contemporary peacebuilding initiatives. This has resulted in a more human-centred peace framework, uplifting the most marginalised voices within a conflict-affected community. Centrally, this article postulates that an intersectional peace approach is an effective method of attaining a gender-just peace, as it can act as a tool of empowerment, mobilising the most marginalised to transgress patriarchal norms and redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within a post-conflict society.

Many contemporary scholars have begun to contest the use of the liberal peace model, critiquing it as a Western process which (re-)inscribes gendered hierarchies and state-centric ideals into peacebuilding processes.¹ From this discourse, an intersectional approach to peace was born; developed as an analytical tool to comprehend the institutional structures and power dynamics that constitute a post-conflict society. As consequence, intersectionality is becoming increasingly practised within International Peace Studies (IPS), deployed to revise society's normative view on gender and gender-specific expression. Centring this development, I will explore the theoretical principles which configure intersectional approaches to peace, empirically exemplified through the gendered advocacy work of rural disabled Tamil women in post-conflict Sri Lanka. First, I will give a brief account of the philosophical history of intersectionality and discuss its recent transposition into IPS. Second, I will relay the possible criticisms relating to (a) intersectionality as an analytical device and (b) NGO's, market feminism and the neo-

¹ Björkdahl, Annika and Selimovic, M., Johanna, "Gendering agency in transitional justice" *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 2, (2015):166.

liberal approach will be accounted for. Finally, I will use an intersectional peace lens to analyse the gendered advocacy work of rural disabled Tamil women in post-conflict Sri Lanka via intersectionality's two doctrines of (a) social identities and (b) institutional structures. Through this rationale, I will argue that an intersectional peace approach is an effective method of attaining a gender-just peace,² as it can act as a tool of empowerment, mobilising the most marginalised to surpass patriarchal norms and redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within a post-conflict society.

The Theory of Intersectionality

i. A History: Critiquing The Conventional Categories of Analysis and Experience

Intersectionality was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), as a means of critiquing 'the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive.'³ Crenshaw (1989; 1990) is a critical legal scholar, who founded this theory through an academic deconstruction of the 'single-axis framework that [was] dominant in anti-discrimination laws', within the United States.⁴ For Crenshaw, this led to an erasure of the inherently interconnected forms of oppression that Black women faced every day; namely, because the single-axis approach failed to recognise the identities of race and gender as intersecting.⁵ These historical beginnings illustrate the critical lens that is rooted within the theory of intersectionality, used as an analytical device to empower the most marginalised within a society.

Following Crenshaw's (1989) theorisation, feminist scholars became increasingly provoked by intersectionality's rich and multifaceted potential, as it promised to eradicate society's common issue of reducing 'people to one category at a time.'⁶ Specifically, feminist intellectuals were fascinated with intersectionality's principle of 'relational' social locations, positing that our gender, class, race, ableness, ethnicity, and sexuality can interactively shape our everyday experiences.⁷ This proposed positionality depends on the hegemonic systems of power that feminists have long

² A gender-just peace being defined as "a fundamental shift in the provision of specific rights related to women's gender roles, [and] a transformation of gender relations in society," (Ibid)

³ Crenshaw, Kimberlé "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1, (1989):139.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Crenshaw, Kimberlé "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6, (1990):1242.

⁶ Phoenix, Ann and Pattynama, Pamela "Intersectionality" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2011):187.

⁷ Ibid, 188.

been critical of, and creates structures of oppression and privilege, such as sexism, racism, or ableism.⁸ In sum, intersectionality is a theoretical method of interpreting the intricacy of our society, of individuals, and of the human condition, it remains a core concept within modern feminist thought.⁹ These academic developments laid the foundation for intersectionality to be further applied to an array of disciplines. I will now discuss how intersectionality has been grounded within IPS, and its theoretical ability to achieve a gender-just peace.

ii. Grounding IPS in Intersectionality

Prior to academia's gravitation towards intersectionality, IPS was centred around the liberal peace model, which has been widely critiqued for its State-centred principles of 'democratisation, the rule of law, human rights, free and globalised markets, and neo-liberal developments.'¹⁰ Recently, these axioms of peace have been framed as a Westernised sense of truth, which underrepresents the importance of 'critical and post-structural thinking', particularly through notions of 'hegemony and domination, self-other relations, identity, particularism and pluralism.'¹¹ These philosophical concerns have led scholars to look beyond this classical model, and re-imagine peace via a bottom-up approach.¹² Due to this paradigm shift, a multitude of academics have become increasingly interested in a more human-centred peace theory.

Many IPS researchers have begun to seek growth through the employment of some feminist methodologies, by grounding the theory of intersectionality into their peacebuilding frameworks.¹³ This has encouraged scholars to conceptualise a peace agreement not just as a broker to end a state conflict, but as an emancipatory tool to identify the 'plurality of subjectivities, systems of oppression, and agencies that are created and enacted' as a result of a conflict.¹⁴ By merging the theory of intersectionality into IPS, a positive outlook on peace has been established; resulting in a more gender-sensitive peacebuilding outlook.¹⁵ An intersectional approach to peace has been founded upon the

⁸ Bunjun, Benita "Feminist Organizations and Intersectionality: Contesting Hegemonic Feminism" *Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 34, no. 2, (2010): 116.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Richmond, P., Oliver "Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace" *Milennium* 38, no. 3, (2010):292.

¹¹ Ibid, 294.

¹² Stavrevska, B. Elena, and Smith, Sarah "Intersectionality and Peace" in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies*, ed. Richmond, Oliver and Visoka, Gezim (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020):3.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid, 4.

analytical incorporation of various (a) social identities, and (b) institutional structures. I will now detail these two core principles respectively, to elaborate on how they interact to create oppressive gender systems within a post-conflict state.

First, an intersectional approach to peace focuses on the identities of the people who exist within a post-conflict state, along with the social status that these identifications qualify them to possess.¹⁶ Through this principle, intersectional peace ‘contributes to our understanding of why specific voices are marginalised and silenced’, within post-conflict societies, while others are amplified.¹⁷ To highlight this, intersectional peace methods ‘often start from a narrative angle,’ emphasising the locals’ lives as its prime source of information.¹⁸ This centering of the narrator assigns a sense of agency to the people who exist within a post-conflict state, by constructing this peacebuilding method through their resistance to various systems of oppression.¹⁹ These personal narratives highlight the impact that social identities can have on an individual’s position in society, and the importance of considering them from the perspective of IPS. As a result, social identifications should be a central consideration when working to achieve a gender-just peace, as an examination of this category can unveil the public power that each person possesses on the grounds of their gender. I will now show how these identifications can interact with the institutional structures that exist within a post-conflict society, and produce newfound gender hierarchies.

Second, intersectionality has contributed to a more enriched dialogue encompassing peace and conflict, by exposing the institutional structures which intensify an individual or social group’s marginalisation within a post-conflict society.²⁰ For example, this can be exemplified through the ‘superficial understandings of gender,’ found in some conventional conceptualisations of peace, which systematically disregard the broader power dynamics that (re-)produce and ‘hierarchically structure masculinities and femininities.’²¹ To illustrate, IPS research carried out on the ‘gendered experiences of war,’ occasionally omit how gender intersects with peace, and

¹⁶ Kappler, Stephanie and Le-may-Hébert, Nicholas “From power-blind binaries to the intersectionality of peace: connecting feminism and critical peace and conflict studies” *Peacebuilding* 7, no. 2, (2019):162.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Kappler et al. “From power-blind binaries to the intersectionality of peace”:170.

¹⁹ Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala and Rooney, Eilish “Underenforcement and Intersectionality: Gendered Aspects of Transition for Women” *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1, no. 3, (2007):353.

²⁰ Stavrevska and Smith, “Intersectionality and Peace”:5.

²¹ Lederach, J., Angela “Youth provoking peace: an intersectional approach to territorial peacebuilding in Colombia” *Peacebuilding* 8, no. 2, (2020):200.

by default, who is conferred with superior public power within a post-conflict State’s gender hierarchies.²² However, an intersectional peace approach can combat against this binarised outlook, as it not only supports the inclusion of all the social identifications that exist within a post-conflict nation, but also delves deeper into how power functions between and within these social categories.²³ Through this understanding, a more in-depth interpretation of a gender-just peace can be discovered. On the other hand, in order to fairly assess this theorisation, the possible disadvantages of intersectionality and feminist advocacy will now be assessed; primarily, through reviewing the scholarly critique of intersectionality as an analytical device.

iii. The Possible Disadvantages of Intersectionality as an Analytical Device

Many academics have grown critical of intersectionality’s cross-disciplinary application; viewed as a tool of scholarly appropriation, to ‘[reinscribe] white middle-class heterosexual women as the dominant subject position of feminist politics.’²⁴ These critiques have been derived from the theoretical displacement that many Black and women of colour feminists have experienced from intersectionality’s recent popularisation in the West.²⁵ As a result, many feminists have become wary of intersectionality, believing that it has developed to reflect the neoliberal principles it was originally working to dismantle.²⁶ This has driven an array of academics to abandon the theory altogether, viewing it as a corrupted project of whiteness and oppression. Davis (2020) outlines intersectionality’s three core areas of tension. First, a multitude of academics ‘including Crenshaw herself, express concern that her work has been ignored, misread, misunderstood and distorted,’ by Continental European feminists. Second, there is debate whether women of colour should always be seen ‘as the rightful empirical and epistemological subjects of intersectional analysis.’ Finally it is contested ‘whether intersectionality should be viewed as a Black feminist theory,’ in origin, or one of the Global South.²⁷ These conceptual critiques have left an array of scholars

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Tomlinson, Barabara “Category anxiety and the invisible white woman: Managing intersectionality at the scene of argument” *Feminist Theory* 19, no. 2, (2018):146.

²⁵ Davis, Kathy “Who owns intersectionality? Some reflections on feminist debates on how theories travel” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 27, no. 2, (2020):113.

²⁶ Ibid, 114.

²⁷ Ibid, 117-119.

to question the validity of intersectionality and renounce its academic legitimacy.

In essence, intersectionality has recently been employed by many white European feminists, who have misconstrued the essence of this theorisation and essentialised the identity categories of gender, race, and class.²⁸ Carastathis (2008) argues that intersectionality has begun to work solely to privilege 'difference' between individuals, and in many ways, superficially reduces people to their social identities.²⁹ As a result, intersectionality's critics believe that '[B]lack women will never be anything more than a crossroads between two kinds of domination,' and are denied a sense of 'wholeness,' as an individual.³⁰

Through this perspective, intersectionality is described as a process of 're-centring whiteness,' as it authorises white European feminists to covertly hegemonise 'the object' within intersectional studies and create an 'epistemic whiteness,' through their position within this research.³¹ This undermines a great deal of what intersectionality claims to achieve and problematises the proposed achievements of this theory.

However, the academics arguing to preserve intersectionality's favourable status hold that these modern developments should be viewed as 'an occasion for dialogue rather than a contest over ownership.'³² These scholars draw on Said's (1983; 2000) 'now classic essay on traveling theory.'³³ Initially, Said (1983) discussed the loss of 'originality and insurgency,' that theories may experience from being disseminated throughout society.³⁴ However, in his revised version, Said (2000) revoked this critique and posited that this traveling of theory may 'radicalize and reinvigorate,' our society's systems of ideas.³⁵ Therefore, academics and feminist theorists alike must, therefore, acknowledge that we cannot predict how each concept and theory will be developed and translated. Debate, discussion, disagreement and progression are all a natural part of academia, and should be regarded as a logical step in intersectionality's conceptual growth. Expanding upon this criticism, the prospective issues relating to NGOs, market feminism and the neoliberal approach will now be discussed.

²⁸ Carastathis, Anna "The Invisibility of Privilege: A Critique of Intersectional Models of Identity" *The Ethics Forum* 3, no. 2, (2008):27.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Harris (1990) in Carastathis, Anna "The Invisibility of Privilege: A Critique of Intersectional Models of Identity" *The Ethics Forum* 3, no. 2, (2008):27.

³¹ Salskov, A., Salla "A Critique of Our Own? On Intersectionality and 'Epistemic Habits' in a Study of Racialization and Homonationalism in a Nordic Context" *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 28, no. 3, (2020):3.

³² Davis, "Who owns intersectionality?":113.

³³ Carbado, W., Devon "Colorblind intersectionality" *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 4, (2013):812.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

iv. NGOs, Market Feminism and The Neoliberal Approach

The United Nations' Decade for Women (1975-1985) led to an increased awareness of society's deficit in gender equality, resulting in a global recommendation for society to expand its feminist agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs).³⁶ As a result, many feminist NGOs 'have spread across the world and become key actors in gender policy.'³⁷ This 'NGO-isation' of the public sphere has had some negative impacts, 'especially [regarding] their often depoliticising and de-democratising effects,' on civil society.³⁸ For many, the NGOs' approaches to societal development have utilised a neoliberal strategisation of social services, aiming to marketise society's endeavour toward gender equality and individual empowerment.³⁹ This has introduced a new form of governance into society, and ultimately reshaped the feminist movement.

Fundamentally, contemporary feminist NGOs have been driven to 'rely on market ideas and practices,' in the hopes of acquiring private funding to support their mission statements.⁴⁰ This form of NGO funding 'neutralises feminism through professionalisation [...] and bureaucratisation,' by '[discourging] the growth and maintenance of feminist subcultures that resist hegemonic gender relations,' to appear attractive to private funders.⁴¹ Due to this, many academics believe that contemporary feminist NGOs 'fail to challenge existing structures of civil society, the state, and the economy that perpetuate gender and other inequalities.'⁴² This deradicalisation has altered the very ideology that feminism was founded upon, and driven the women's movement to employ a marketised strategy of gender equality in order to survive.

On the other hand, a multitude of scholars view this process of NGO-isation as a natural development in society's sphere of governance, enhancing the new 'market opportunities,' that can come from increased private funding and mainstream interest in feminist NGOs.⁴³ Specifically, 'the emergence of new, flexible

³⁶ Kantola et al. "From state feminism to market feminism?" *International Political Science Review* 33, no. 4, (2012):382.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Merz, Sibille "'Missionaries of the new era': Neoliberalism and NGOs in Palestine" *Race & Class* 54, no. 1, (2012):52.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Kantola et al. "From state feminism to market feminism?":390.

⁴¹ Guenther, Katja "The Possibilities and Pitfalls of NGO Feminism: Insights from Postsocialist Eastern Europe" *Signs* 36, no. 4, (2011):874.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Kantola et al. "From state feminism to market feminism?":395.

institutions pursuing gender equality may allow for the more effective mainstreaming of gender considerations,' and greater incorporation of feminist thought in public policy formation.⁴⁴ Through this lens, the neoliberal approach to NGOs and 'market feminism' may be understood as a transposition of feminism's principles and practices into the public sphere, offering new means of political participation.⁴⁵ This discussion will now be assessed through empirical means, by reviewing intersectionality's two doctrines of (a) social identities, and (b) institutional structures through the gendered advocacy work of rural disabled Tamil women in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Here, I will define an intersectional peace approach as an effective method of establishing a gender-just peace, as it can act as a tool of empowerment, mobilising the most marginalised to transgress patriarchal norms and redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within a post-conflict society.

Gendered Advocacy as a Tool of Post-Conflict Empowerment

The Sri Lankan Civil War was a long and brutal conflict, deeply entrenched in ethnic divides and human rights abuses.⁴⁶ These violent histories have led many researchers to investigate the rates of marginalisation caused by the injuries incurred during this time.⁴⁷ However, this body of work has frequently disregarded the category of gender, rendering rural disabled Tamil women in Sri Lanka statistically and socially marginalised.⁴⁸ Specifically, the civil war in Sri Lanka caused '8.7 percent of the Sri Lankan population [to] have disabilities, of which 57 percent are women.'⁴⁹ Consequently, it is crucial to employ an intersectional peace lens upon this case, to deconstruct the 'triple discrimination,' that these women face 'via income inequality, family dynamics, and social and cultural stereotypes.'⁵⁰ Additionally, this lens will further highlight the inherently intersectional nature of the peace work that these women carried out with 'The Association of Women with Disabilities,' (AKASA) and rectify the disregard that gender has experienced within

44 Ibid

45 Ibid

46 Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy: Tamil women with disabilities in rural post-conflict Sri Lanka" *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* 33, no. 1, (2017):45.

47 Ibid

48 Samararatne et al. "'Out of the Shadows': War-affected Women with Disabilities in Sri Lanka: Final Report" (2018):2.

49 Ibid, 1.

50 Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":43.

this area of IPS.⁵¹ From a narrative angle, I will now examine the gendered advocacy work carried out by rural disabled Tamil women with AKASA, through intersectionality's first axiom of social identities. This section will highlight the empowerment that these women experienced from gendered advocacy work, mobilising them to overcome their society's patriarchal norms and form a gender-just peace.

i. The Positive Identity of Rural Disabled Tamil Women

Rural disabled Tamil women have long 'faced new and separate forms of stigma on the grounds of their gender,' leading them to experience problems when trying 'to reintegrate into society...due to their impairment, as they are perceived to be unable to fulfil their sexual and domestic duties.'⁵² To contextualise, Sri Lanka's post-conflict society is said to uphold a range of patriarchal norms, leaving many rural disabled Tamil women to be socially displaced, and expected to marry in order to re-establish themselves within their community.⁵³ Due to this ostracisation, these rural disabled Tamil women have been exposed to 'the highest-levels of gender-related violence, abject poverty, stigmatisation and exclusion.'⁵⁴ This compounded oppression has been normalised by the patriarchal ideals socialised within post-conflict Sri Lanka, leaving these gender-based issues to be deprioritised and underreported.

As a result of this layered oppression, many rural disabled Tamil women became involved with the AKASA organisation.⁵⁵ AKASA is a local institute that focuses on creating a narrative promoting Tamil women's disability rights, by encouraging its members to claim a new positive assertion as disabled Tamil women, and use this identification to become inter-communal peacebuilders.⁵⁶ For instance, through this new positive identity, many rural disabled Tamil women have found a 'growing confidence to resist the cultural stigmas attached to their disability,' and progress novel 'cross-ethnic relationships,' with rural Sinhalese disabled women.⁵⁷ The women on both sides of this ethnic divide believe that they would not have discovered these cross-ethnic ties without AKASA's peacebuild-

51 Ibid

52 Meier, D., Larissa "An intersectional approach to the understanding of patterns of marginalisation among ex-combatants with disabilities in Sri Lanka" *Conflict, Security & Development* 20, no. 4, (2020):11.

53 Hettiarachchi, Shyamani and

54 Samararatne, Dinesha and Soldatic, Karen "Inclusions and exclusions in law: experiences of women with disability in rural and war-affected areas in Sri Lanka" *Disability & Society* 30, no. 5, (2015):768.

55 Ibid

56 Samararatne, Dinesha and Soldatic, Karen "Transitioning with Disability: Justice for Women with Disabilities in Post-war Sri Lanka" in *Rethinking Transitional Gender Justice*, ed. Shackel, Rita and Fiske, Lucy (Sydney: Palgrave, 2019):324.

57 Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":51-52.

ing initiatives, which led them to realise their own individual disability rights, and together, create a new sub-community of rural disabled Tamil and Sinhalese women.⁵⁸ Consequently, AKASA has encouraged many rural disabled Tamil women to overturn their society's patriarchal norms, mobilising them to transform into established peacebuilders and independent members of their post-conflict society.

Therefore, AKASA's gendered disability-centred peacebuilding not only empowered these Tamil women to experience new forms of social emancipation, but also undertook the ground-breaking work of creating cross-ethnic ties between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.⁵⁹ This process of unification can be seen as a real-life manifestation of transversal politics,' as AKASA's intersectional peacebuilding inherently promoted the principle that 'the only way to approach "the truth" is by a dialogue between people of differential positionings.'⁶⁰ As a result, these women prevailed against the patriarchal norms upheld within Sri Lanka and made monumental progression toward acquiring a gender-just peace, all through the empowerment that they received from AKASA's intersectional peacebuilding. I will now further assess this gendered advocacy work, through intersectionality's second axiom of institutional structures. This section will emphasise how AKASA's intersectional peacebuilding has mobilised these rural disabled Tamil women to redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within post-conflict Sri Lanka, and continue to advance toward a gender-just peace.

ii. The Institutional Violence Perpetrated by Sri Lanka's Welfare System

AKASA has described Sri Lanka's 'administration of the disability welfare system [as] disabling in itself.'⁶¹ Specifically, it has been reported that the Sri Lankan welfare system was set up with no consideration of the gendered, physical, linguistic, economic or cultural limitations that these rural disabled Tamil women would experience when seeking financial aid.⁶² For instance, the Tamil women involved in AKASA have reported a range of accessibility issues. First, the welfare

⁵⁸ Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":51-52.

⁵⁹ Samararatne and Soldatic "Transitioning with Disability":319.

⁶⁰ Yuval-Davis, Nira "What is 'Transversal Politics'? *Soundings* 1, no. 22, (1999): 95.

⁶¹ Samararatne and Soldatic "Transitioning with Disability":326.

⁶² Ibid

office's building entrance is only approachable following a flight of stairs.⁶³ Second, this physical limitation is further exacerbated by the 'compounding and intersecting difficulties of living in a rural village, [and] not having disability-accessible public transport,' to get to the administration office's location.⁶⁴ Third, the documents that they are required to fill out to be considered for this financial support are not offered in any rural languages.⁶⁵ This is particularly harmful for rural disabled Tamil women, as they have the lowest rates of literacy and education in Sri Lanka, causing it to be practically impossible for them to complete any stages of this application process without the help of an able-bodied Sinhala-speaking person.⁶⁶ Due to these institutional structures, many rural disabled Tamil women have been left without any opportunity to seek financial welfare for their disabilities, which violates their human rights as Sri Lankan citizens.⁶⁷ As a result, these women are left to either face income poverty, or accept employment in dangerous environments where workplace assault is rampant.⁶⁸ Therefore, the Sri Lankan government has created a multitude of interlocking systems of institutional violence and failed to achieve a gender-just peace. This is underpinned by the oppressive gender hierarchy institutionalised within Sri Lanka's post-conflict society.

Consequently, these oppressive structures have forced many rural disabled Tamil women to seek AKASA's services; to help them journey to the welfare offices, fill out the application forms, and ultimately, promote 'their economic integration,' in post-conflict Sri Lankan society.⁶⁹ Furthering this work, AKASA's overarching peace mission is to reshape the gender hierarchy that these women live in, to ensure that they do not need to rely on these governmental bodies to achieve a gender-just peace.⁷⁰ In this aim, they have developed various 'disability rights leadership training,' programs, which are regularly regarded as 'one of the most significant elements in rebuilding,' these women's lives.⁷¹ Specifically, AKASA's leadership initiative has empowered these women "to resist oppressive gendered

⁶³ Samararatne and Soldatic "Inclusions and exclusions in law":766.

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Samararatne et al. "Out of the Shadows":19.

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Meier, "An intersectional approach":14.

⁶⁸ Samararatne et al. "Out of the Shadows":3

⁶⁹ Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":50.

⁷⁰ Meier, "An intersectional approach":9.

⁷¹ Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":52.

and disablist social norms and take up positions of leadership (which are usually exclusive to men) . . . within local organizations.⁷² As a result, AKASA's leadership programs have acted as a tool of gendered empowerment, causing these rural disabled Tamil women to 'become agents of change,' in reforming the gender hierarchy which has conventionally structured Sri Lanka's post-conflict society.⁷³ This has put an end to the 'gendered and disablist discrimination,' that they have experienced through Sri Lanka's welfare system, by promoting them as leaders within their community.⁷⁴ Therefore, these rural disabled Tamil women have defied Sri Lanka's traditionalist gender hierarchy, and created a gender-just peace through AKASA's intersectional peacebuilding initiatives. This example has demonstrated that an intersectional peace approach is an effective method of attaining a gender-just peace, as it can act as a tool of empowerment, mobilising the most marginalised to transgress patriarchal norms and redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within a post-conflict society.

⁷² Kandasamy et al. "Peace, justice and disabled women's advocacy":52.

⁷³ Ibid, 53.

⁷⁴ Ibid

To conclude, an intersectional peace method can be an emancipating force for the subordinated factions of a post-conflict society, as it has the power to act as a tool of empowerment, and to overturn the patriarchal attitudes and gendered hierarchies which work to oppress them. This current examination focused on providing a more holistic view of gender, by highlighting its intersecting identities of ethnicity, rurality, disability, and income. Here, I have argued that intersectionality is an important view to consider, particularly within IPS, to continually improve our world's peacebuilding initiatives and promote a focalisation on gender-based issues.

Through considering the many faces of intersectionality and feminist thought, this assessment strove to showcase the unifying effects of gendered-advocacy work, and the revolutionary impacts it can have on war-torn communities. In sum, this assessment highlighted the power of intersectional peace approaches, and their proposed ability to create a gender-just peace. This was discussed through emphasising the gendered empow-

erment inherently rooted within intersectional peace, which has the capacity to mobilise the most marginalised to transgress patriarchal norms and redefine the gender hierarchy upheld within a post-conflict society.